

shows that, as a Senator, he has repeatedly used tactics to block and delay votes on qualified women and minorities nominated to the federal courts.

Senator Ashcroft's decisive role in sabotaging the nomination of a well qualified African American, Judge Ronnie White, to the federal bench points to his disregard for judicial independence and his willingness to use ideological litmus tests in the judicial selection process.

Ashcroft spearheaded the party-line vote to defeat Judge Ronnie White's confirmation to a federal district court judgeship. He did this by misrepresenting Judge White's record, labeling him pro-criminal because of his death penalty record even though White voted to uphold the death penalty over 70% of the time.

The Attorney General should have the temperament, objectivity and commitment to fairness necessary to carry the awesome responsibilities of Attorney General.

Ashcroft's fervent and long-term commitment to his extremist political beliefs call into question his ability to suppress those political beliefs and enforce the constitutional principles with which he so profoundly disagrees. This extremist ideology also raises questions about his objectivity.

As a member of the Senate he made racially insensitive comments to Southern Partisan magazine that were divisive. Ashcroft applauded the magazine for its "heritage of doing that, of defending Southern patriots like [Robert E.] Lee, [Stonewall] Jackson, and [Jefferson] Davis." Southern Partisan has printed articles stating that African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other immigrants have "no temperament for democracy, never had, [and] never will" and that these groups have dissipated the nation's "genetic race pool."

He further demonstrated his racial insensitivity when, as a United States Senator from a state with over 500,000 African Americans, he gave the commencement address and received an honorary degree from Bob Jones University, a school known for its racist policies and anti-Catholic bigotry. Although Ashcroft has claimed that he did not know about the policies of the University, he has refused to return the degree. The credibility of his denial is called into question when as governor he declined to appoint a professor to a state judgeship who had made supportive comments of the University in a law review article.

We are communicating our opposition to Senators Helms and Edwards as well as members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. We urge our membership to oppose vigorously this nomination. We join the multitude of organizations opposing this nomination.

#### EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR VICTIMS OF EARTHQUAKE IN INDIA ON JANUARY 26, 2001, AND SUPPORT FOR ONGOING AID EFFORTS

SPEECH OF

**HON. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 31, 2001*

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my sympathy for the victims of the earthquake in Gujarat state in India, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution, which demonstrates our commitment here in Congress to the victims of this tragedy.

Over the past few days, Americans have been confronted with images of the devastation in Western India. Of course, Americans of Indian descent have been concerned for their family and friends. But no American who saw the extent of the tragedy in Gujarat could be unmoved by the fate of the citizens of our sister democracy. Americans and Indians share a bond forged by shared values. And that bond has motivated Americans to ask their government to play an active role in assisting the victims of this earthquake.

Thankfully, the administration has been quick to respond. By Sunday morning, an assessment team from the United States Agency for International Development was on the ground in Gujarat, determining needs and offering immediate comfort to victims. Since that time, the United States has provided generators, water purification equipment, tents and food to assist the survivors. The United States is continuing to work with relief agencies to get more critical assistance into the crisis zone as soon as possible. My colleagues and I in the Caucus for India and Indo-Americans have been working with the administration to minimize any roadblocks which could prevent the delivery of assistance.

I commend the administration for their quick response. But we here in Congress must ensure that as the immediate shock of this tragedy fades, our commitment to the victims does not fade along with it. Long after this earthquake passes from the headlines of American papers, we need to remember that people in Gujarat will be working to rebuild their homes, their businesses, and their lives. The leaders of our nation, the world's oldest democracy, must never forget our bond with the people of India, the world's largest democracy. I have written to the President and the Director of the United States Agency for International Development to urge them to show their commitment to assist India in the aftermath of this crisis. I will be working over the coming months to ensure that the United States provides what ever is necessary to ease the suffering of the victims of the Gujarat earthquake.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MINUTEMAN MARCHING BAND

**HON. JOHN W. OLVER**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band on its appearance in the 2001 Presidential Inaugural Parade. The Minuteman Marching Band was nominated by the Governor of Massachusetts and was selected by the Inaugural Committee to appear in the parade.

The Minuteman Marching Band has long been recognized for its excellence, receiving the prestigious Sudler Trophy in 1998. In addition, the band has a history of participation in Presidential inaugural festivities. The Minutemen marched in the 1981 Presidential Inaugural Parade and performed at the Inaugural Ceremonies in 1985.

The band, made up of 300 students, represents 16 states and over 90 Massachusetts communities. These talented students provide

an invaluable service to the student body of UMass-Amherst, and to the citizens of the state of Massachusetts. They performed admirably in the 2001 Inaugural Parade, and everyone from the UMass community is proud of their achievement. I am pleased to recognize the band's director, George Parks, and all the students in the band for their outstanding performance.

#### SUPPORT THE MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL IMPROVEMENTS ACT

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleague and fellow veteran, LANE EVANS, in reintroducing the Montgomery G.I. Bill Improvements Act. H.R. 1071 had the support of 160 of my colleagues in the 106th Congress, all of whom recognized, like our new Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, that improving the military's primary education benefit, the Montgomery G.I. Bill, is wise policy for a number of reasons. It will reverse the military's deteriorating ability to recruit the number and quality of individuals it needs; it provides veterans the tools necessary to reenter the workforce; and, it expands access to higher education to the young men and women in uniform.

In 1999, the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance, chaired by now Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, recommended overhauling and greatly improving the G.I. Bill. Our legislation is modeled on the Commission's recommendation, and I am encouraged and hopeful that the new Administration will work with us to pass this important bill. Clearly, Sec. Principi's appointment is a positive development.

America's military supremacy has been unquestioned since the end of the Cold War. In the Gulf War, Bosnia, and Kosovo we proved that our armed forces set the world standard for excellence. While much of our battlefield success has to do with the superiority of our weapons systems, weapons are only as good as the people who operate them. Our success on the battlefield boils down to the quality and ability of our troops.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the military is having increasing difficulty recruiting the quantity and quality of troops it needs to meet today's challenges. Recruiting shortfalls are a serious problem, and as statistics have grown worse, recruiting budgets have soared. In addition to new advertising campaigns, the services have resorted to gimmicks, including sponsoring drag racers, deploying psychedelic humvees, and offering emergency cash giveaways. I do not criticize the armed forces for these efforts, but they highlight the need for a greater, more effective recruiting tool. The best recruiting tool is education, and we would best help our armed forces by modernizing the military's primary education benefit, the Montgomery G.I. Bill.

The Department of Defense's Youth Attitude Tracking Studies (YATS) confirm that fewer young men and women are considering serving. This shouldn't come as a surprise. "Money for college" is the top reason young